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ABSTRACT

During the 1989-90 school year, the state of Maryland focused on heightening awareness, reaffirming commitments, and establishing partnerships between schools and shelters to ensure that homeless students had access to and success in school. The following accomplishments are outlined: (1) 21 local school districts implemented local policies and procedures for registration, transfer, and withdrawal of homeless students; (2) 30 site visits were conducted to feeder elementary and middle schools and 17 site visits were conducted at homeless shelters; (3) technical assistance was provided to feeder elementary schools and middle schools through 11 staff awareness sessions; (4) the first annual statewide conference on the education of homeless children and youth was planned and implemented; (5) a statewide tracking system for homeless children was maintained to provide accurate unduplicated statistical data; (6) an annual report and two brochures containing information about homeless children and youth were published and distributed; and (7) seven exemplary practices that meet the educational needs of homeless students were identified. Recommendations to increase the educational stability, continuity, and success of homeless children are made. Statistical data are presented in one table and six graphs. The following materials are included: (1) a profile of the life of a homeless family; (2) descriptions of four shelter-school partnership programs and three exemplary local practices; (3) the questionnaire used for site visits; and (4) a list of contacts for a video and other resources. (FMW)

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Educating Homeless Children and Youth: How Are We Measuring Up?

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A Progress Report
School Year 1989–90

Maryland State Department of Education

UD 027 964

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Educating Homeless Children and Youth

How Are We Measuring UP?

A Progress Report

School Year 1989-90

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Compensatory Education and Support Services
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CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 1

Measuring Our Progress 2
- Accomplishments
- Recommendations

Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth. 4
- Profile: The Life of a Homeless Family
- Statistical Data

Shelter – School Partnerships 15
- Meade Heights Elementary School and Sarah's House
- Bradley Hills Elementary School and Greentree Shelter
- Commodore John Rodgers and Bea Gaddy Shelter
- Lockerman Bundy Elementary School

Exemplary Practices 18
- Baltimore City's Parent Outreach Program
- Helping Hands: An After School Tutorial and Homework Assistance Project
- Open Book Project

Public Awareness 21
- On-Site School Visits
- Staff Awareness Sessions
- First Annual Statewide Conference
- Video Distribution
- Publications

Introduction

"I cried when we came to the shelter. I don't want to be here. I want to go home"

Cheryl
Age: 8

"I can't let my friends know where I'm living. They won't understand. They'll make jokes."

Eric
Age: 13

"I don't have any friends. I left my friends and all my toys where I use to live."

Brandon
Age: 11

Homeless children have the same needs as other children. They need understanding, love, and acceptance. They need a place to call home and a sense of belonging to a neighborhood and school. The comfort and security of a home is an essential foundation of childhood. It is devastating for children to wake up and find their family has no place to live, and they have lost their friends, school, neighborhood, and most of their possessions. For homeless children, school can offer the continuity, security, and normalcy otherwise missing in their daily lives. Unfortunately, homeless children must overcome many barriers in obtaining an education. They change schools frequently, and they face difficulties in transferring between schools and districts, obtaining transportation to and from school, and finding a quiet place to study and do homework. In addition, many homeless children do not receive adequate nutrition and health care and suffer academically because of it. Just as the children of homeless parents are not responsible for the barriers to obtaining an education, neither can they remove those barriers without our help.

This progress report measures how well we are working together to remove the barriers between homeless children and their education. It outlines our accomplishments for school year 1989-90 and makes recommendations for addressing specific issues. The statistical data provide a closer look at the number of homeless children and youth in the state and each local jurisdiction. Revisions in local policies and procedures have had a tremendous impact on the number of homeless students attending and not attending school. The revised policies for 21 local school districts have been compiled and an explanation of the eligibility of homeless children in the Chapter 1 policy is provided in our resource guide. Exemplary shelter-school partnerships and local, state, and national initiatives that address the needs of Maryland's homeless students have been cited. In addition, this report outlines the various initiatives that were implemented to heighten public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of Maryland's homeless students.

Measuring Our Progress

Accomplishments

During the 1989-90 school year, we have focused on heightening our awareness, reaffirming our commitments, and establishing partnerships to ensure that our homeless students have access to and success in Maryland's schools. The following are our accomplishments for this school year:

- o Implementing local policies and procedures for the registration, transfer, and withdrawal of homeless students. Policies and procedures have been adopted and implemented in 21 local school districts.

- o Conducting 30 on-site school visits to feeder elementary and middle schools and 17 on-site shelter visits.

- o Providing technical assistance to feeder elementary and middle schools by conducting 11 staff awareness sessions.

- o Planning and implementing the first annual statewide Conference for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

- o Maintaining a tracking system for homeless children in Maryland to provide accurate unduplicated statistical data.

- o Collecting and disseminating information about Maryland's homeless children and youth through the following publications:

  - Annual Progress Report, SY 1989-90
  - Statistical Poster/Brochure
  - Parent Information Brochure

- o Identifying exemplary practices that meet the educational needs of our homeless students.

  - Baltimore City's Parent Outreach Program
  - School/Shelter Partnership: Meade Heights and Sarah's House
  - Open Book Project
  - Helping Hands: An after school tutorial and homework assistance project
  - Lockerman Bundy's "Pennies For the Homeless Project"
  - Bradley Hill's "Welcome Packets" for homeless students
  - Commodore John Rodger's Educational Resource Center at the shelter

We have made considerable progress in removing barriers and making our schools accessible to Maryland's homeless students; however, there is still much to do to help our homeless students maintain stability, continuity, and success in school. These are our recommendations:

Recommendations

- Pass the proposed legislation which would provide funds for the transportation of homeless students and ensure that school assignments are made in the best interest of the child.

- Streamline or revise special education procedures to ensure that eligible homeless students receive the services.

- Target homeless students for existing school-based programs that may be adapted to meet their needs.

- Extend parental involvement programs to include parents in emergency and transitional shelters and motels.

- Expand pilot special initiatives to include all homeless children in shelters and motels and extend the programs through the summer months.

- Continue to establish shelter/school partnerships and implement school-initiated projects that help meet the needs of homeless students (i.e. school supplies collections).

- Increase State and local staff awareness initiatives to heighten the awareness and sensitivity level of educators, parents, and students.

Maryland's Homeless Children and Youth

PROFILE: THE LIFE OF A HOMELESS FAMILY

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"I want you to know that there are homeless people from all walks of life for many different reasons. So when you hear homeless, don't just think of the alcoholics, drug addicts or lazy people that just don't want any better. But, think of yourselves; healthy, educated, motivated individuals less three paychecks. I also want you to remember that loving families, good homes, and rewarding careers are just a few things our children dream about. Parents, educators, and society must work together to make the children's dreams a reality."

By Idell Morse
Parent
Springhill Transitional Shelter
Baltimore City

Imagine being a parent sitting at the dinner table with your child and discussing your day, and your child tells you that he doesn't want to go to school anymore because his classmates make fun of him because he is homeless and lives in a shelter. I have an eleven year old son and I felt this pain. My son and I live at the Springhill Transitional Housing Program. This is an 18 to 24 month program that helps a family move from dependence to independence.

I was adopted at birth, and due to the instability of my adoptive family I became homeless at the age of eleven. Living in numerous group homes and foster homes and transferring to many different schools, I soon became very introverted. Having to deal with cruel realities over which I had no control and having to attend strange classes with cruel students, I began to play hookey on the neighborhood playground. Through school I had no friends. I was the butt of many cruel jokes and found no recourse in a foster family that was only concerned with the amount of funds given by the state. I soon found peace and happiness by escaping into a world of alcohol, drugs, and the unknown. I lived this way until I became pregnant at the age of sixteen.

Having to accept responsibilities I wasn't ready for, I became employed as a clerk for a florist. While trying to take care of a child and a household, I soon fell. I never learned the concept of financial management or responsibility. With the pressures of fending for myself, being a young single mother, and the loneliness, I again turned to the life I knew would take me outside of myself and my worries. I soon lost sight of reality; I had taken a bad situation and made it worse. I lost my job and my home. I forced my son and myself to move anywhere that would accept us. For the next few years I sank deeper into despair. Within three years, I had been hospitalized, placed on psychiatric wards, and arrested. My son and I were forced to live in shelters, rooms, vacant houses, and anywhere we could lay our heads. Finally, I couldn't deal with life as it was anymore. Thinking my son would be better off without me, I tried suicide. Not successfully completing this task, I was again put on a psychiatric ward and my son in foster care. My thinking was wrong. My son always saw a light at the end of the tunnel. Although he had gone to four different schools in one school year, he always did well. Perhaps it was because of the innocence of the very young, not knowing or caring where anyone lives or how they live, just having fun.

My son was taken from me and placed in a foster home for 1 1/2 years. My son lost hope, suffered separation from his mother, and endured the humiliation inflicted from his classmates' jokes. He also felt the lack of concern, love and attention only a mother can give. His self-esteem and self worth were minimal, and he no longer saw that light at the end of the tunnel. He lost weight, grew silent, and failed in school.

Meanwhile, I had concluded that this would be a way of life for me, and my son would be well taken care of in his foster home. Always having a roof over his head, food on the table, and friends at school, he would soon forget about me. He would grow to be healthy and happy; so I thought. But, one night while at the shelter I received a phone call. My son was calling just to say hello and to ask when I was coming to see him. Within the next two weeks, I scheduled an appointment with his foster care worker to arrange a

meeting to see the bouncy, stubborn, happy little boy I remembered. But, much to my surprise, what I saw when I walked into the room was a frightened, skinny, lifeless, quiet little child. My heart dropped I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe I wanted this for my child. I saw my son going down the same road I had traveled. I couldn't subject my son to the loneliness, pain and suffering I had been subjected to. I met with his foster care worker and requested that he rewrite my return agreement and give me a new deadline. I had a lot of work ahead and little time to do it in; but, the job was going to to get done!

I began by accepting a dietary assistant position paying a little over $4.00 an hour. My main problem was locating affordable housing. The shelter where I was residing at this time mentioned the Transitional Housing Program. I could live with my son for up to 18 months at the shelter. I looked into this idea and, after several interviews, I was accepted into the program. Two months later my son was returned to me. I still wasn't out of the forest. I had to rebuild a relationship with my son. I had to rebuild his self-esteem and self-worth. I had to raise his educational interest. My stay at the Transitional Housing Program made it possible for all of these things to occur. Due to a low program fee, I could afford to quit the dietary assistant position I had and brush up on my skills, while mainly focusing on rebuilding my little boy's life.

At the Springhill Transitional Housing Program I was offered single counseling as well as family counseling. The program had an employment counselor to help me with work and school issues, an after-school program offering school-aged children a structured learning environment, and staff to help parents with the care and understanding of children. In addition, there's a drug counselor on site to help with any substance abuse issues. The staff isn't the proverbial stuffed shirts. They interact, react, and even become friends. They don't do a nine to five, but they are there when you need them. For me, this program served as a stepping stone. It gave me my own apartment and independence while giving me the structured assistance I needed. The stability I established, due to the length of the stay, was, without a doubt, an invaluable asset. The Transitional Housing Program has allowed me to obtain a full-time administrative assistant position with a reputable firm. I'm attending the Community College of Baltimore part-time in the evenings with hopes of receiving a degree in Business Administration. My son has grown academically. He is in the GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program at this school and he hopes to attend Loyola Middle School on scholarship. My son has become a confident, outgoing leader of his peers.

My son still faces hostilities at school and tries his best not to let any of his classmates know where he is living by ducking out of the building or waiting for his classmates to leave the neighborhood before going into the building. But, at least, he is comfortable knowing he has a place to sleep, a bedroom to call his own, and no worries about tomorrow or if he will have any dinner tonight. We will be leaving Springhill in a few months, but in leaving we will be happy knowing that we had the chance and time to grow and be the best we could be.

Idell and her son graduated from the Springhill Transitional Program in May. They have their own apartment and they are doing well.

Statistical Data

Maryland's Tracking System for Homeless Children and Youth is a collaborative effort among the various groups that provide a service to homeless youth or families with homeless children. The tracking system provides unduplicated counts on the number and location of homeless students attending and not attending school from July 1, 1989 thru June 30, 1990. Information generated from the system also provides reasons for a homeless student's non-attendance in Maryland's schools. The reasons reported for a homeless child's non-attendance in Maryland's schools include: lack of transportation, lack of day care, uncertainty about family's plans, and concern for the child's safety.

o Lack of Transportation

On a case by case basis, our local school systems are providing transportation for some homeless students back to their home school. However, most of our homeless students attend the school in the attendance zone of the shelter. The length of time it takes to schedule transportation for these students has generated concern. Scheduling transportation for the homeless student is averaging seven days in some counties. Expedience in scheduling transportation for a homeless student is very important when you consider that the average length of stay in an emergency shelter is thirty to forty days and our homeless students are averaging five to six different schools in a year.

o Lack of Day Care

Shelter providers mandate that school-age children must attend school while the family resides at the shelter. However, they have no control over the families once they leave the shelter. Very often, the homeless parent's plans will change and an older sibling is kept out of school to watch the younger brothers and sisters while the parent keeps scheduled appointments or looks for housing and employment.

Many homeless parents do not register their five year olds for kindergarten or they withdraw the children once they become homeless. It is very difficult for a homeless parent to keep scheduled appointments, to look for housing and employment, and to be on time to pick up a five year old who is enrolled in the school's half day kindergarten program.

o Uncertainty About Family's Plans

Homeless parents living in motels or with a relative or friend may become overly optimistic about how soon their homelessness will end. In many cases, the parents may decide to wait before enrolling their children in school. Unfortunately, a one week delay extends to months and the children do not attend school.

Many of Maryland's emergency shelters can not accommodate intact families and/or families with children over the age of twelve-particularly male children. Very often, these children are left in the custody of a relative or friend and the children may not attend school until the family is reunited and becomes stable.

o Concern for the Child's Safety

Consistently, mothers living in domestic violence shelters have indicated that their children do not attend school for extended periods of time because they fear that the father (in some cases the boyfriend) will harm the child or discover their new address.

Homeless Children in Maryland
School Year 1989–90

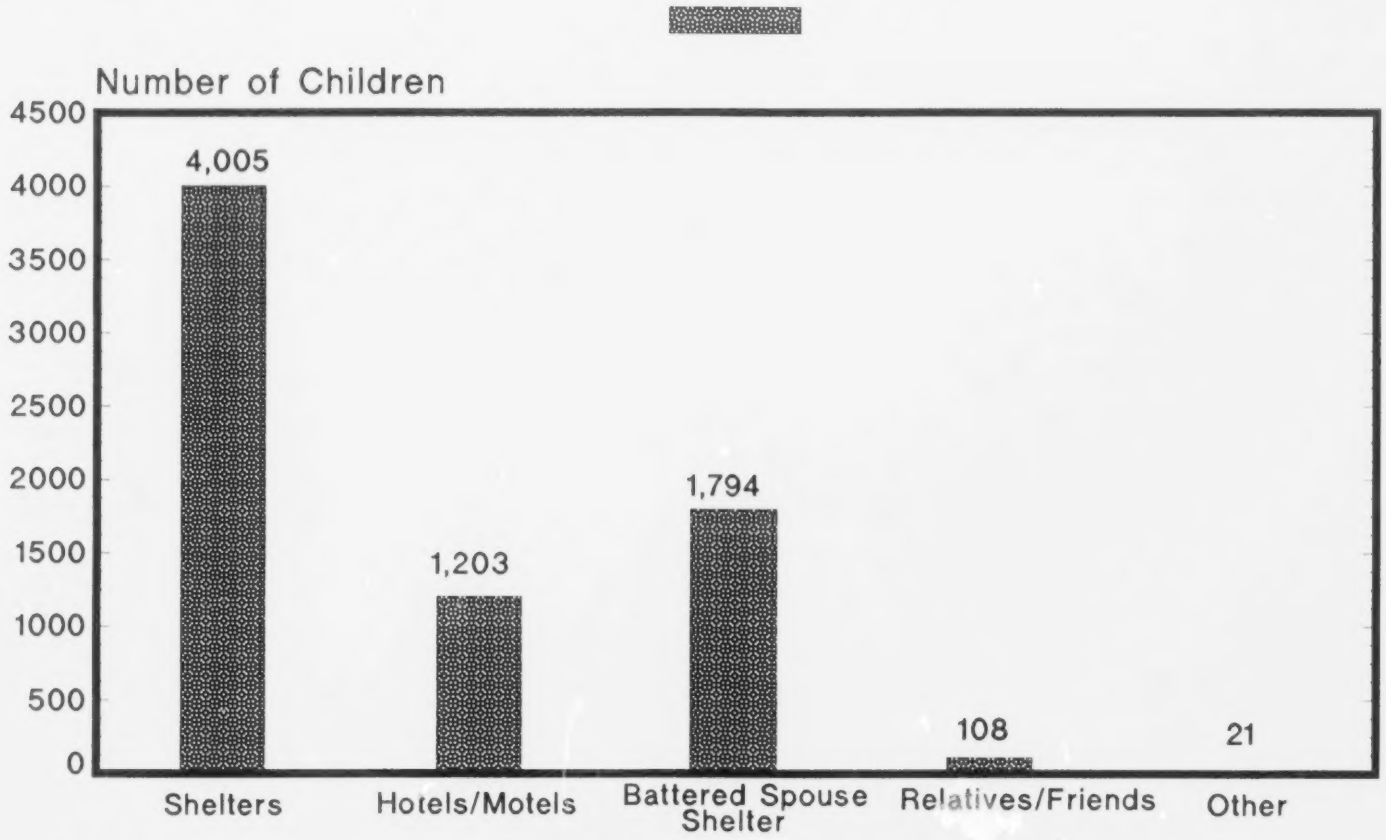
City/County	Total No. of Homeless Children	Total No. of School-Age Children (6–16 yrs.)
Baltimore City	2,051	1,061
Montgomery	1,170	503
Prince George's	850	482
Baltimore County	696	376
Anne Arundel	383	159
Charles	353	131
Washington	346	117
Howard	227	101
Cecil	221	97
Frederick	183	74
Worcester	154	70
Carroll	124	55
Allegany	117	59
Wicomico	104	61
St. Mary's	80	38
Talbot	29	24
Caroline	19	13
Dorchester	8	8
Calvert	7	6
Kent	4	2
Harford	2	2
Somerset	1	–
Queen Anne's	–	–
Garrett	–	–
		3,439
		Kgn + 487
Totals	7,129*	3,926

*Actual total is 7,131. The name of City/County was not reported for 2 children

11 A

HOUSING FOR MARYLAND'S HOMELESS CHILDREN

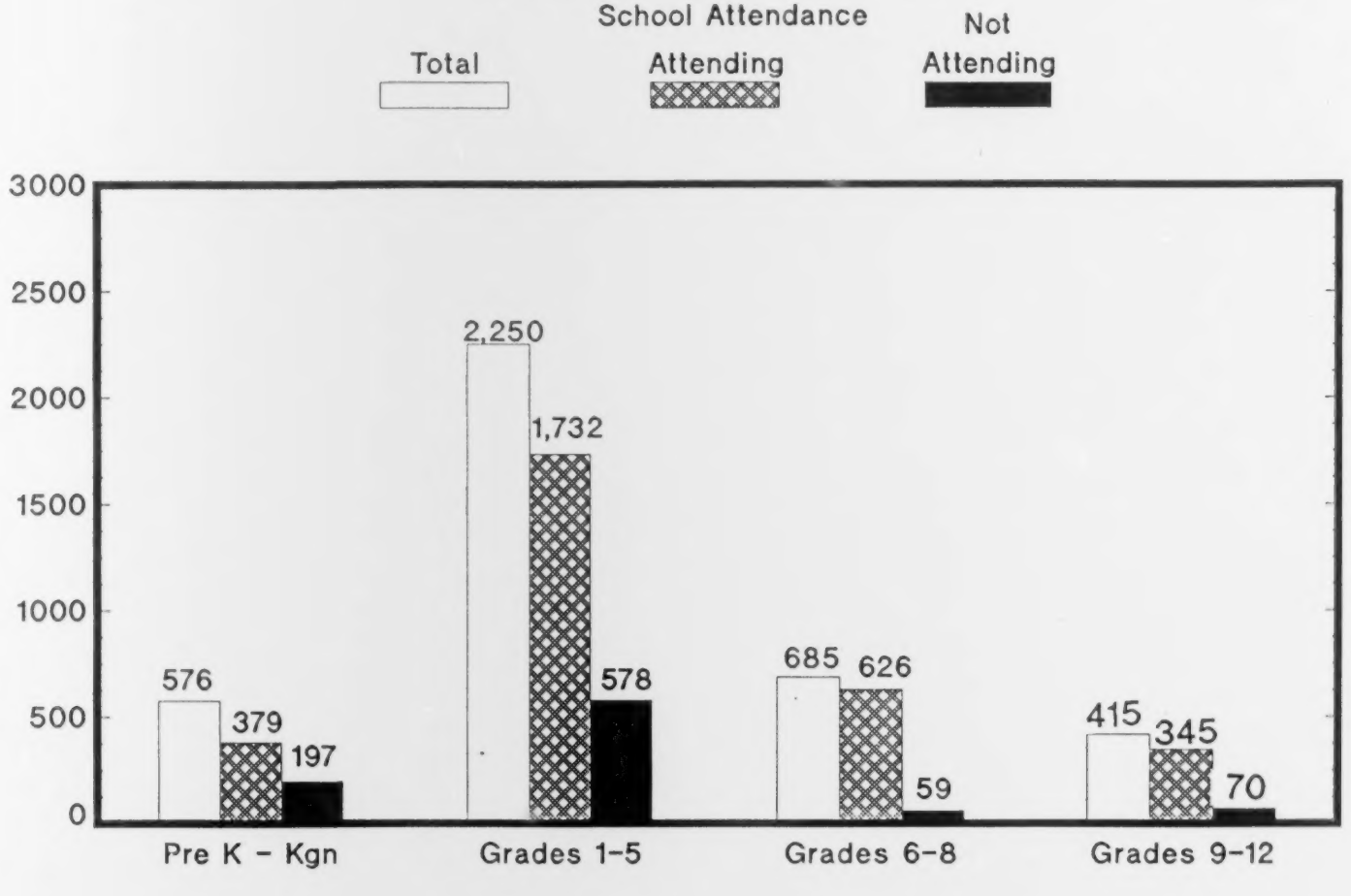
School Year 89-90



Total Number = 7,131

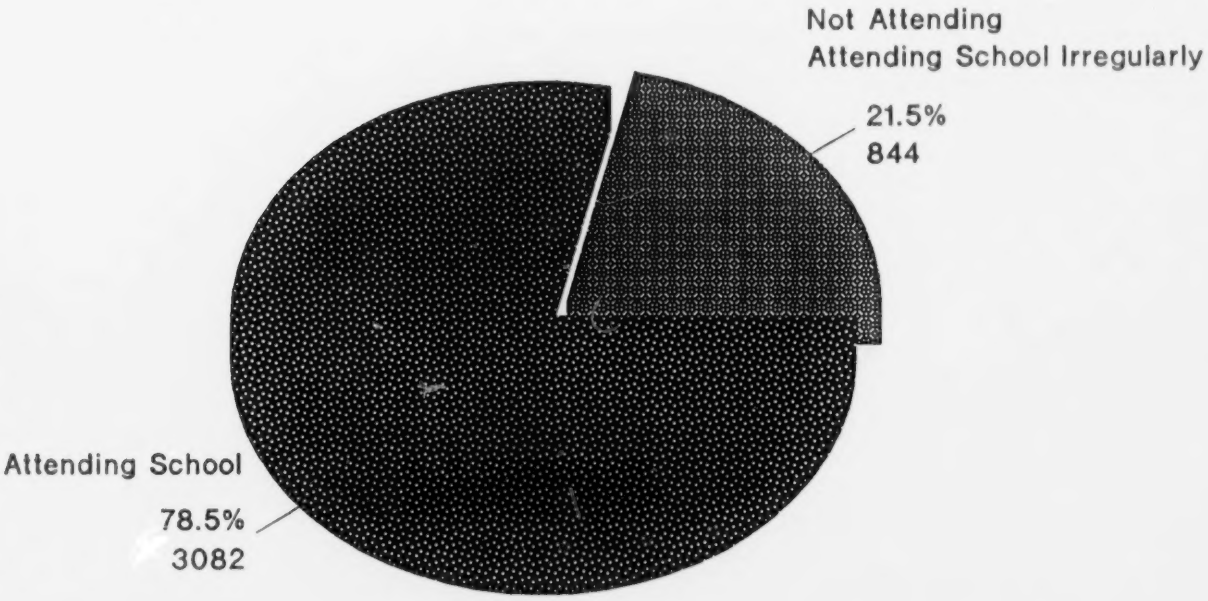
HOMELESS CHILDREN IN MARYLAND

School Year 1989-90



HOMELESS SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN MARYLAND

School Year 1989-90

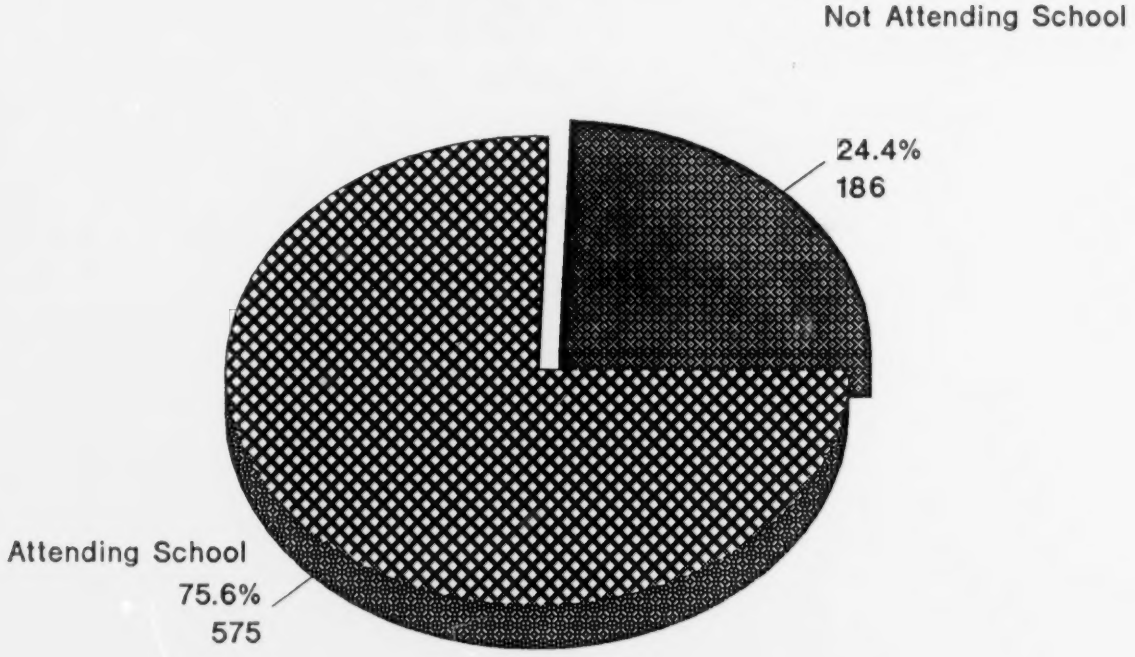


Total Number of Children = 3,926

BATTERED SPOUSE SHELTERS IN MARYLAND

School Age Homeless Children

School Year 89-90



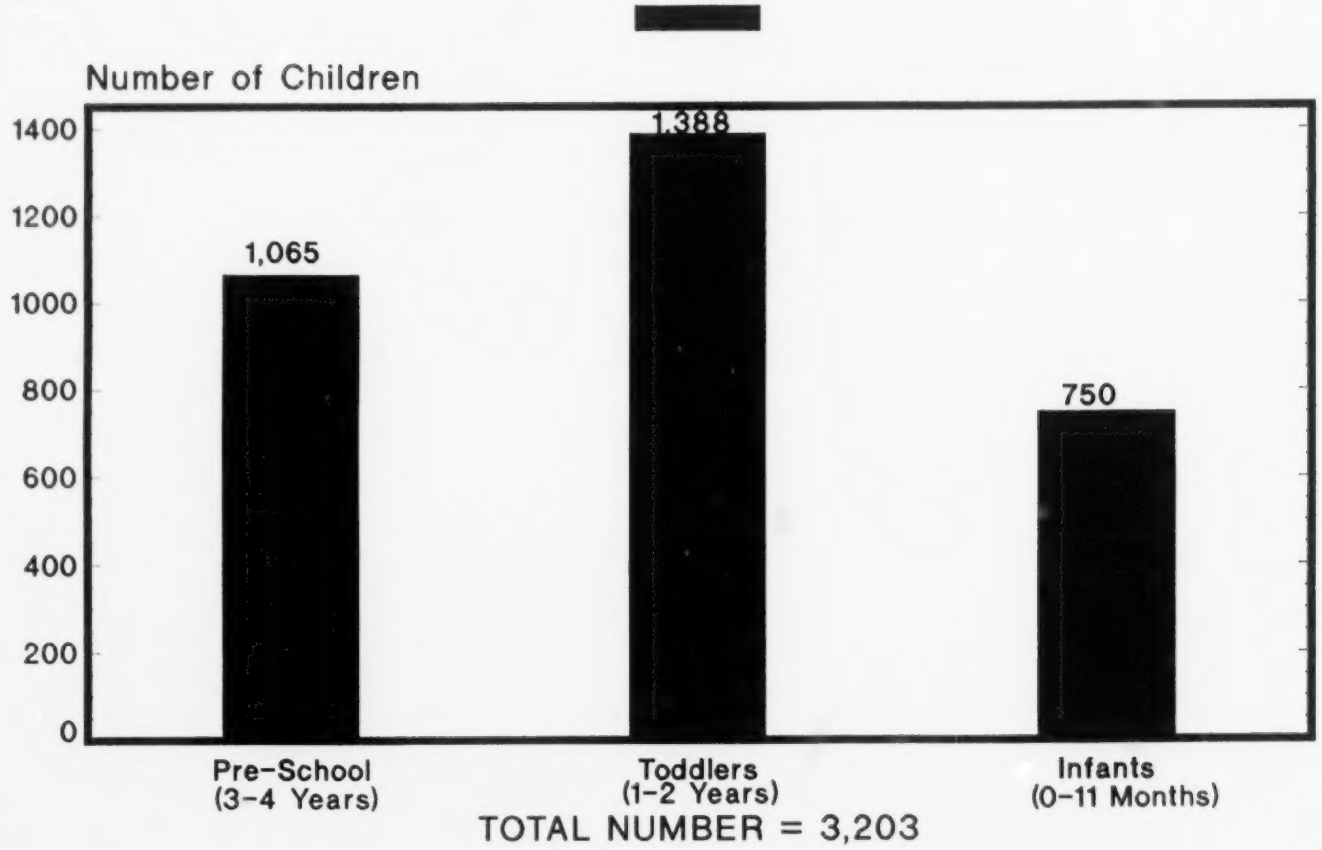
17

Total Number of Children = 761

HOMELESS CHILDREN IN MARYLAND

Four Years of Age and Under

School Year 1989-90

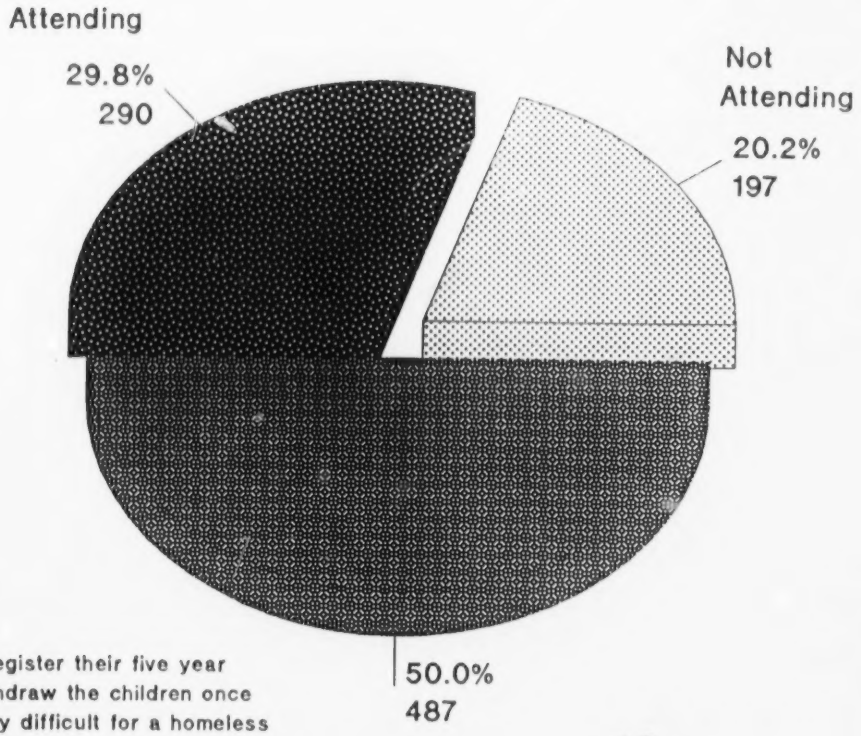


TOTAL NUMBER = 3,203

HOMELESS CHILDREN IN MARYLAND

School Year 1989-90

Five Year Olds



Many homeless parents do not register their five year olds for kindergarten or they withdraw the children once they become homeless. It is very difficult for a homeless parent to keep scheduled appointments, to look for housing and employment, and to pick up a five year old who is enrolled in the school's half day kindergarten program.

Shelter-School Partnerships

Throughout the school year, we have encouraged staff from local feeder schools and shelters to establish partnerships and work together to improve the educational experience of homeless children in Maryland. The partnerships usually begin with an invitation from the feeder school principal to the shelter director to share with the school staff facts about the child's home-the emergency or transitional shelter. The discussions help to heighten the teachers' awareness and sensitivity to the effects of homelessness on the lives of school children and always lead to a request from the teachers or invitation from the shelter director to visit the shelter.

The following shelter-school partnerships are examples of the special initiatives that can evolve when school and shelter staff work together.

Meade Heights and Sarah's House

Shelter-Based Tutorial Program

Meade Heights Elementary School and Sarah's House are located in Anne Arundel County. Meade Heights Elementary School has a population of 321 children and serves as the feeder elementary school for Sarah's House. Sarah's House is an emergency shelter for thirty-four homeless women and children and thirty men. Residents are referred to the shelter by the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services for a six week to two months length of stay.

The staff at Meade Heights saw a need for tutorial assistance and follow-up for the transient population of children living at Sarah's House and attending Meade Heights Elementary School. A core of teachers planned and implemented a shelter-based tutorial assistance program that provides the children with tutorial assistance in reading and mathematics. The tutors, teachers from Meade Heights, met with the children Tuesday thru Thursday for one hour each day. Teachers who worked in the program were able to provide follow-up on a child's progress and needs by conferencing with the child's classroom teacher during the school day. In addition, the tutors had immediate access to the child's parents because all tutoring sessions occurred at the shelter. To reduce the potential for burnout, the teachers rotated the schedules

Contacts: Esther White, principal
Mary Giergerich, reading teacher
674-3661

Bradley Hills Elementary School and Greentree Shelter

Welcome Packets for Homeless Students
A Minigrant Proposal: Sensitivity Awareness of Homeless Families

Bradley Hills Elementary School and Greentree Shelter are located in Montgomery County. Bradley Hills Elementary School has a population of 318 children and serves as the feeder elementary school for Greentree Shelter. Greentree is a fifty bed transitional shelter for homeless women with children. The length of stay is six to twelve months.

The staff at Bradley Hills Elementary School observed that many of their homeless students did not have the appropriate school supplies. The teachers organized a collection drive and prepared "Welcome Packets" that can be stored and given to new students throughout the school year. The Welcome Packets consisted of school supplies, toiletries, and a welcome to Bradley Hills smile.

In addition to the Welcome Packets, the principal and staff saw a need to begin an articulation process between the school and Greentree Shelter to provide sensitivity awareness inservice for staff, students and parents; and to target homeless students for counseling, basic skills instruction in reading and mathematics and the staff mentoring program. To address these needs, the Bradley Hills staff has submitted a Minigrant Proposal to the Montgomery County Public Schools for funding and approval to implement their Sensitivity Awareness of Homeless Families plan.

Contact: William Porton, principal
571-6966

Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School and Bea Gaddy's Women and Children's Shelter

Educational Resource Room

Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School and Bea Gaddy's Women and Children's Shelter are located in Baltimore City. Commodore John Rodgers has 845 children and serves as the feeder school for Bea Gaddy's Shelter. Bea Gaddy's is an emergency shelter for homeless women with children. The length of stay at the shelter is one day to one year, depending upon the needs of the family.

The staff at Commodore John Rodgers saw a need for educational resource materials, educational games, and fun activities for the children living at Bea Gaddy's Shelter. Using the theme, Children Helping Children, the staff organized a drive to collect monies for a Resource Room to be created at the shelter. Each family was asked to donate $1.00 to purchase the materials for the resource room. The staff surveyed the children and the consensus was that a nintendo, video recorder, and encyclopedias should be purchased with the $1,000 collected during the drive. The principal and student government leaders presented the gifts to the shelter director. The staff made a commitment to paint and organize the Educational Resource Room and to volunteer reading to younger children and helping with homework assignments at least twice a week. As an enhancement to the Educational Resource Room, the Maryland State Department of Education included the shelter in the Open Book Project. Through this project, the shelter is constantly supplied with a variety of reading books for levels pre-school through grade 8.

Contact: Willie Grier, principal
396-9300

Lockerman Bundy Elementary School

A Fish Bowl of Pennies for the Homeless

Lockerman Bundy Elementary School is located in Baltimore City and it has a population of 490 children. Although homeless students are registered at Lockerman Bundy, the school does not serve as a feeder school for any of the family shelters in Baltimore City. However, the staff and students wanted to adopt a shelter and plan and implement a project that would help the children in the shelter.

As part of a scheduled faculty meeting, the principal invited a speaker to discuss the effects of homelessness on children living in Baltimore's shelters. Following the meeting, the teachers shared information about homelessness with the students, and the Positive Image Committee selected a shelter to adopt and contacted the shelter director to determine the needs of the children living at the adopted shelter - Bea Gaddy's Women and Children's Shelter. For the next month, the children brought in pennies for the children in their adopted shelter and placed them in a large container, the fish bowl. At the conclusion of their penny collection drive, the pennies were counted and a program planned for the presentation of the pennies to the shelter director. Children from each grade level participated in the program and one student presented Bea Gaddy with a fish bowl of $524.00 in pennies.

"We give you these pennies in love
and hope that it will help to buy school
supplies for the girls and boys living
at the shelter."

Contact: Lana Powell, principal
396-1364

Exemplary Practices

Baltimore City's Chapter 1 Homeless Shelter Outreach Program

Baltimore City Public Schools has approximately one-third of Maryland's homeless school-aged children, and many of these children are serviced in the Chapter 1 Elementary Program. A component of the Chapter 1 Elementary Program is Parent Involvement. School-based parent liaisons are assigned to each of the 112 Chapter 1 schools and their responsibility is to coordinate the school's parent involvement activities. This school year, Baltimore City Public Schools saw a need to expand the focus of the parent involvement program to include parents in Baltimore City's ten shelters for homeless families. The school-based parent liaison helps to nurture the shelter-school partnership by incorporating the following activities into the school's Parent Involvement Program:

- Establishing rapport with homeless shelter directors by inviting them to schools to talk with parents and staff
- Supporting shelter activities by sensitizing staff to the needs of homeless children
- Monitoring homeless children's attendance
- Visiting the homeless shelter to inform parents and directors of school and community programs
- Conducting meetings with parents at the shelter
- Sharing school resources with homeless shelters
- Conducting workshops for homeless parents based on their needs
- Attending statewide homeless conferences

Successful outreach activities include the following:

- Establishing an Instructional Resource Center at Bea Gaddy's Homeless Shelter
- Donating educational materials and clothing, purchasing school uniforms, and donating money to all 10 shelters
- Involving parents and parent liaisons in state-sponsored training sessions focusing on developmental stages of children

Helping Hands: An After School Tutorial and Homework Assistance Project

During the 1989-90 school year, the Maryland State Department of Education piloted the following special initiatives:

- Helping Hands Project - a homework assistance project implemented at the YWCA and Springhill shelters. Each shelter was matched with a local library that provided a scheduled time and place for

the children to do homework. In addition, a teacher and four student homework assistants, honor students from the local high school, worked with the children four days a week for 1 1/2 hours each week.

- Project Sail - a cultural enrichment project that provided sailing experiences for children residing in Baltimore City's homeless family shelters. The homeless family shelters were clustered for spring, summer, and fall sails. The thirty children, staff, and parents participated in hands-on activities aboard the Mildred Belle at the Baltimore Harbor. The children and their parents worked on assigned tasks in teams to navigate the vessel.

- On-Site Tutorial Project - a tutorial assistance project for children residing in the shelters in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, and Howard County. Volunteer professional tutors worked with children in assigned shelters for two days a week and one hour each day. The tutors focused on reading, mathematics, and language skills.

For school year 1990-91, we will merge the three pilot projects and expand the project, to include 18 emergency and transitional shelters in the state. The following is a summary of the Helping Hands project that will be implemented November, 1990, with funds acquired from the United States Department of Education's Exemplary Grant Award.

Demand for this direct service has increased as a result of the success of the pilot project the continued need for on-going homework and tutorial assistance for Maryland's 6,500 homeless students, the lack of reference materials and reading books at the shelters, and the accessibility of transportation to public local libraries.

To help meet these needs, the Helping Hands Project will:

1. Expand the services to include the 18 emergency and transitional shelters in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.

2. Provide reference materials and consumable workbooks, and establish a reading corner at each shelter.

3. Extend homework tutoring sessions to four days a week.

4. Offer training sessions and an annual incentive/recruitment banquet for tutors.

5. Expand cultural enrichment activities to include sailing experiences aboard the Mildred Belle and trips to see local theatrical productions.

6. Provide a part-time facilitator to recruit and train tutoring teams and implement and monitor all other activities for the project.

Open Book Project

Springhill and Rutland Transitional Programs and Bea Gaddy's Women and Children's shelters in Baltimore City were selected by the Maryland State Department of Education to participate in a nationwide Open Book Project. Reading Is Fundamental has implemented the Open Book Project to establish reading corners in homeless shelters and other facilities serving at-risk youth and to provide books for children to keep. A different selection of books, ranging from pre-school to level 8, are shipped to the shelters monthly. In addition to the books, motivational materials for children and parents are available in the reading corners. These include book plates, posters and bookmarks. Open Book is possible by book donations from publishers and distributions and contributions from the Xerox Foundation, the Gleneagles Foundation and individual contributions.

As an enhancement to the Open Book Project, the Maryland State Department of Education will assign volunteer readers to each shelter to read to the children and to listen to the children read and discuss their books.

Public Awareness

On-Site School Visits

The Maryland State Department of Education conducted 30 on-site school visits during school year 1989-90. The Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth visited the feeder elementary and middle schools for the emergency and transitional shelters and emergency motels in the state. The purpose of the visits was to collect data about the special educational needs and attendance patterns of our homeless students, to identify exemplary practices being implemented in Maryland's schools, to heighten the awareness level of school staff, and to provide technical assistance to local school administrators and staff. The following information was documented after interviewing school staff, and reviewing students' records in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties:

- The schools averaged one to five homeless students per month.
- Many of the schools did not have school records for all the homeless children enrolled. One elementary school had eighteen students registered and the school records for seven of the students had not been received. The students had been in the school for thirty-two days.
- 75% of the administrators interviewed were aware of the local Policies and Procedures for the Registration, Transfer and Withdrawal of Homeless Children.
- 95% of the administrators and staff interviewed have not had any contact with the shelter director or staff in their attendance zone.
- Many of the administrators and staff reported that it's difficult to identify the students' educational needs because the school records arrive late, if at all, and the students usually do not remain in the school longer than a month.
- Some of the administrators reported having difficulty receiving a student's records because of a financial obligation to the former school for non-returned books.
- The homeless students' records indicated that they are averaging 5-6 different schools.
- 95% of the administrators requested and scheduled a staff awareness session for their faculty and staff.

Staff Awareness Sessions

During the on-site visits, many of the administrators requested and scheduled staff awareness sessions to be conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education. To date, 11 staff awareness sessions have been conducted for school-based staff. The state coordinator and the shelter director provide an overview of why families are becoming homeless, statistical data on the number of homeless children and youth reported, and a closer look at life in a shelter. Following the question and answer segment, the shelter director extends an invitation to the staff to visit the shelter. The staff awareness session not only heightens the awareness and sensitivity level of staff but it helps schools and shelters to build or enhance their partnerships.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Coordinator for the Education
of Homeless Children and Youth

On-Site Interview

Date: _____

Local Jurisdiction: _____

Feeder School: _____

Shelter: _____

Person Interviewed:

/ / Principal / / Teacher / / Counselor

/ / Parent Liaison / / Other Staff _____
(Specify)

Name of Person Interviewed: _____ Telephone No. _____

I. Are you aware of the homeless children enrolled in your school/classroom? If yes, please explain who identifies the children and any special concerns you may have.

II. Do you, or other staff, have any contact with the shelter director or staff where your homeless children are temporarily living? Explain. If no, do you know the location of the shelter/motel?

III. Are you aware of your school system's policies and procedures for the registration, transfer, and withdrawal of a homeless student? If yes, have you had any problems enrolling these students? What do you do?

IV. Are you aware of the special educational needs of your homeless students? If so, how are these needs identified and addressed?

V. What technical assistance can this office provide to you and your staff?

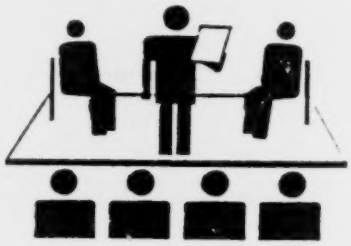
VI. Would you be interested in receiving a mini-grant to provide an on-site Homework Assistance/Tutorial Program for the homeless students residing in your community shelter?

First Annual Statewide Conference

The Educating Homeless Children and Youth Conference was held on May 4, 1990, at the Holiday Inn-BWI. The purpose of the conference was (1) to create awareness of the effects of homelessness on the lives of school children who are homeless in Maryland, (2) to sensitize participants to the wide range of associated problems, and (3) to highlight partnerships and exemplary practices that improve the educational experience of homeless children in Maryland schools. The two hundred and sixty participants consisted of educators, shelter providers, nurses, guidance counselors, secretaries, social workers, case managers, parents, community leaders and advocates for the homeless. The conference workshops included the following:

- Removing Educational Barriers
- Empowerment Through Shelter-School Partnerships
- Building Self-Esteem in the Homeless Family
- Family Violence: Issues of Concern to Educators
- Tutoring the Homeless Student at the Shelter
- Tips on Counseling the Homeless Student
- Runaway Homeless Youth: Issues of Concern to Educators

In addition to the workshops, a panel of homeless parents and shelter providers discussed The Life of a Homeless Child. The keynote speaker, Jacqueline Gaines, executive director for Health Care for the Homeless, shared this message...



For most children, America is a small country: only as big as a house or a neighborhood or a schoolyard; only as big as a mother's lap or a place called home. But within that small world, the future takes shape - their future and the future of our nation. Hopes are born. Learning begins. You play an integral role in helping shape their world and our nation's future. Childhood seems like it will last forever. It won't, of course, but what a child sees and experiences can well last a lifetime. It is sad to think and realize that in this affluent country, children are the largest single age group living in poverty, and certainly the fastest growing homeless population. The U.S. Census states:

> "Thirteen million American children are living in poverty." The Maryland Food Committee documented that: "Fifty-one percent of those served by food pantries in Maryland are children. One hundred thousand American children go to sleep homeless every night." In 1988, sixty-eight percent of the twenty-nine major U.S. cities surveyed by the U.S. conference of Mayors reported turning families away from shelters. In 1982, there were between 733,000 and 1.3 million runaway and homeless youth. Seventy-nine percent of homeless youth have been homeless more than once and twenty-five percent have been homeless more than 10 times."

These statistics are frightening!

If experiences in childhood help to mold the future, what does the future hold for homeless children? What could we possibly expect from children whose lives have been colored with:

- A day-to-day existence in which there is always the uncertainty that there will be nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep;
- Eviction, domestic violence, domestic quarrels, and substance abuse add to their list of experiences;
- Their trip to the market with mom or dad is a trip to the neighborhood dumpster;
- Even from the time of conception, their chances for survival are compromised by inadequate or lack of prenatal care, incomplete immunizations, and poor health due to their living environments which are usually crowded and have limited access to appropriate sanitary facilities.

Childhood should conjure up a variety of pleasurable visions like playing softball and birthday parties. Childhood experienced by a homeless child consists of crowded shelters, isolation from peers, depression, and few possessions to call one's own. Instability is their only constant. Despair is their only friend. Certainly, if the parents are struggling to make it from one day to the next, there is little energy remaining for active parenting. The children lose once again. Homeless children learn survival skills and they are afraid of attachment to other people based on their past experiences.

- Why should Johnnie get too close to his classmates? His teachers?
- Why should Johnnie share his feelings? His deepest thoughts?
- How does Johnnie fit in and why should he even try?

Johnnie will be moving on to a new school in a few weeks. His mother could only convince the shelter to let her stay on for two more weeks. Another homeless family will take their space...their home...at least for now.

The theme of this conference is Educating Homeless Children and Youth Through Awareness, Commitment and Partnerships. It is my belief that before we can begin to help others, we must try to see the world through their eyes. I have offered you a small peek into the world of a homeless child and hopefully have begun to increase your awareness of their problems and needs. Unless you were forced or dragged here, your commitment to educating homeless children and having some influence in their lives is evident by your presence here today. I can't peddle or sell you commitment, but I can tell you that without someone, some group, and our country taking some stake in these children's lives and their families, the future for all of us is very bleak. Never think for one moment that the problems faced by homeless children and their families are so great that your actions could not possibly make a difference. Until our state, federal, and local governments take on the buren of solving the homelessness puzzle, we need to become public and private partners and join hands to make a difference even if it means one child or one family at a time! I'd like to conclude by reading you a quote by Benjamin E. Mays:

"It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfilled. But it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal. But it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin."

You, through your efforts, commitment, and partnerships, have the opportunity to give a homeless child:

- Reasonable goals to strive for
- Dreams to dream
- Ideals to hold on to
- Stars to reach for

You have the opportunity to help them aim for something other than failure and more than just survival. Remember, by investing in these children now, you are making an investment in our future.

Video Distribution

At the conclusion of the conference, a representative from each of the school and shelter teams, organizations, and agencies represented received a copy of the video, "Shelter Boy." The participants were encouraged to share the video with staff, students, parents, and community groups throughout the state. The following is a listing of the contact persons who have a copy of the video in your local jurisdiction.

LEA (Central Office)	Contact Person	Telephone No.
Baltimore City	Joanne Chambers (Guidance)	396-8911
	Dale Parker-Brown (Chapter 1)	396-8942
	Joan Y. Harris (School Social Worker)	396-8642
	Stuart Tabb (Court and Attendance Svcs.)	396-8638
Baltimore County	Barbara Bray	887-0832
	Elmer Hall	887-0123
	Thomas J. Jordan	887-4211
Anne Arundel County	Sonia Foreman	
St. Mary's County	Jack Tapper	475-5636
Wicomico County	Edward Taylor	543-4277

Social Services	Contact Person	Telephone #
Baltimore City D.S.S.	Barbara Forrest	361-4168
Montgomery Co. D.S.S.	Esmie V. Parchment	468-4353
Frederick Co. D.S.S.	Patricia Burnett	694-4505
Prince George's Co. D.S.S.	Paul Bifoss	422-5015

Special Advocacy Groups	Contact Person	Telephone No.
Action for Homeless	Jeff Conard	467-3800
Advocates for the Homeless	Marta Holden	898-3992

Shelters	Contact Person	Telephone No.
Sarah's House	Bridget Burnes	551-7722
Midtown Churches	Robert Beckles	889-3001
Southern Area Youth Services	Sue Saccardi	292-3825
Human Services (Carroll County Shelters)	Kathy Biter	857-6244
YWCA Corner House	Shavonnia Miller	247-6286
Prince George's County (Family Emerg. Shelter)	Donna Hodges	422-5381
Prince George's County (Transitional Housing)	Mary Lou McKenna	773-4184
Greentree	Shellie Dettor	365-2190
Antioch	Karol E. Alston	467-8334
Mid Shore Council on Family Violence	Kitty Miller	479-1149
Helping Hand	Cassaundra Brown	269-6070
Second Mile House	Felice Liquori	864-8797
Hughesville Shelter	Sheila Haynes	870-5308
Hearth House	Shalom Belnick	247-7947
Open Door	Colleen Cibula	770-0193
Waldon Sierra	Wendy Hensley	863-6661
Stepping Stone	Cheryl Linden	251-0567
Heartly House	Charlotte Wisner	662-8800
Grassroots	Mary Beth Johnson Lois Lesh	730-6231 531-6006
St. Ambrose	Angela Calamari	465-1036
Family Crisis Center	Elizabeth Baer	285-7496
House of Ruth	Dola LaWal	889-0840
Fellowship of Lights	Manami Jamal-Brown	837-8155

Schools	Contact Person	Telephone No.
Abottston Elementary	Latricia Wise	396-6447
Relay Elementary	Ronnie Preis	887-1426
Bradley Hills Elem.	Carol Brody	571-6966
Dundalk Elem.	Mary Ann Schaefer	887-7013
T.C. Martin Elem.	Gayle Gepert	274-3182
Reisterstown Elem.	Dena Love	887-1133
Malcolm X Elem.	Linda Chinnia	396-0546
Mt. Royal Elem./Middle	Earnestine Stewart	3960865
Lockerman-Bundy Elem.	Brenda Coleman	396-1364
Seat Pleasant Elem.	Brenda Cox	925-8770
Eutaw-Marshburn Elem.	Louise B. Smith	396-0780
Pimlico Middle	Joyce McNeill	396-0810
Commodore John Rodgers Elem.	Willie Grier	396-9300
Rolling Knolls Elem.	Joyce Paga	224-2171
Joseph C. Briscoe Elem.	Ulricia C. Pope	396-0771
Clemens Crossing Elem.	Ruth Heath	730-1806
Meade Heights Elem.	Esther Rooks White	674-3661
Lake Clifton/Eastern High	Carrie Langley	396-6637
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elem.	Rebecca Smith-Wilson	396-0783
Winston Middle	Ossie Duplessy	396-7176
Waverly Elem.	Ruth Eborn	396-6394
Meadfield Heights Elem.	James Sasiadek	396-6460
Twinbrook Elem.	Phyllis A. Parks Robinson	230-5925
Thomas Johnson Elem.	Panjola B. Priest	396-1582
Southeast Middle	Pat Bandell	396-9291
Lansdowne Elem.	Veronica Altuater	887-1408
Booker T. Washington Middle	Patricia A. McNeal	396-7734

Loch Raven Middle	Jim Thompson	887-7656
Langley Park/McCormick	Lettie Morton	445-0515
Dr. Martin L. King Elem.	Florence Wiggins	396-0756
Mildred Monroe Elem.	Ruby Pearson	396-1468

Publications

Public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of our homeless children are significant components in Maryland's State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The following annual publications are being distributed throughout the state:

- Progress Report for School Year 1989-90
- Statistical Data Poster/Brochure
- Parent Information Brochure

For information or additional copies of the publications, please call 301-333-2445 or send a written request to:

Peggy Jackson-Jobe
Maryland State Department of Education
Pupil Services Branch, 4th floor
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201